

## Off with the Old, On with the New?

by Arina Bykadorova

*Creak.* The rusty nails and old wood of the Cyclone groaned as our car reached the highest point. The thoughts of most people, including me, ran along the lines of, "Oh my goodness, we are going to die." Later, though, when I was wandering on the boardwalk, licking my ice cream, I had some room in my head for more tranquil thoughts. Just as I was wondering how a roller coaster can stand for 81 years, I passed a sign which read "thefutureofconeyisland.com." That set me thinking about the neighborhood. How many historic landmarks, how many things to preserve! Still, there are things that should be changed as well.

As much as I love the wind whipping my hair, and the wet sand oozing through my toes, I hate the litter that is strewn the streets, the fact that the rickety huts on the boardwalk can fall any minute, and that one can expect to trip on a loose plank any minute. The beach and the amusement park are areas of endless enjoyment, but the journey there is very unpleasant. The neighborhood just has to be cleaned a bit, made a little safer, and I believe it will reach its peak of popularity. When I walk home from school, I step over trash that was dropped because somebody was too lazy to hold it until the end of the block, where the garbage can is. The city could hire

people to clean the streets. Also, people should be informed in every possible way that we are trying to make the neighborhood better. There could be posters up asking for volunteers to help out. The woodwork on the boardwalk should be strengthened. Recently, I was walking on the boardwalk and saw a tolerably big area of wood broken and cave in. That same day, I saw one of those little verandas collapsed on the floor as if it was made out of toothpicks. What's better than a respectable region on the very shore, and amusement parks around the corner?

Nevertheless, big companies and foundations might cross the line of the extreme and overdo it. I fear that Coney Island might be transformed into a sort of tourist resort, with expensive restaurants and condos. The fun historical part would be lost among the shiny modern equipment. The paintings on the walls of the buildings (like the one on the way to the aquarium) would be covered with ads. There is a certain thrill that runs down one's spine when you think of all the past times Coney Island holds. What a varying reputation it had! Once a rich persons' weekend hangout, once the same for criminals. The cultures are mixed as if someone put a little piece of every country in the word into a blender. Some are new, and some have been around for a while. A tourist-only amusement park would take

homes away from the people that were here first, the people that belong here.

Coney Island should be improved, but not made into some company's billion-dollar income. If Coney Island is to be improved by someone at all, that person has to take in to consideration both sides of the story, the improvement and the preservation, of such a famous and beloved place.